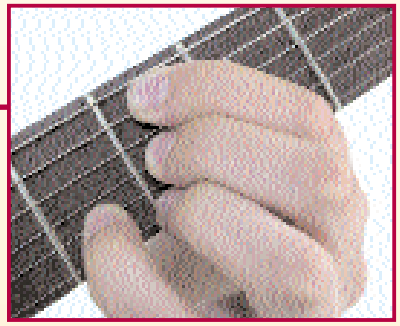
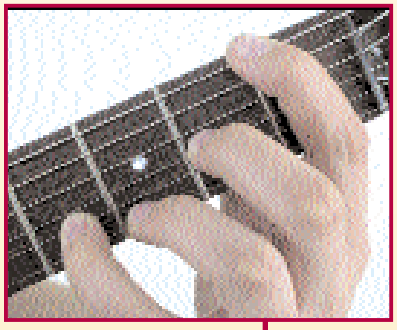
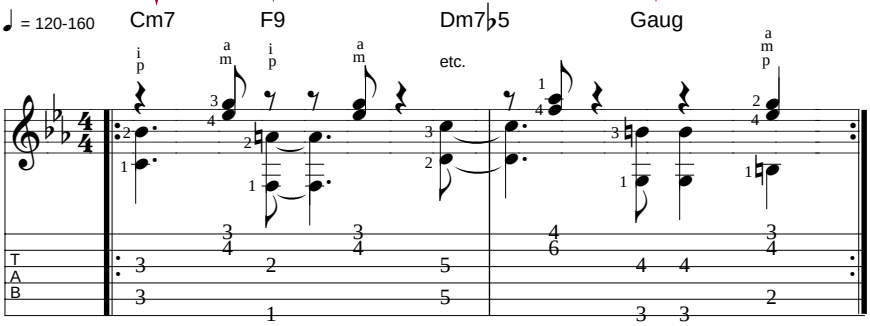
Piano-Style Comping

BY JUDE GOLD

Why should pianists have all the fun? When it comes to playing two-part comping patterns, it's hard to compete with 88 keys and ten fingers—unless you're Tuck Andress or Charlie Hunter. However, this spicy montuno riff (**Ex. 1**) will add a "two-handed," piano-style salsa vibe to your playing *and* buff out your chops.

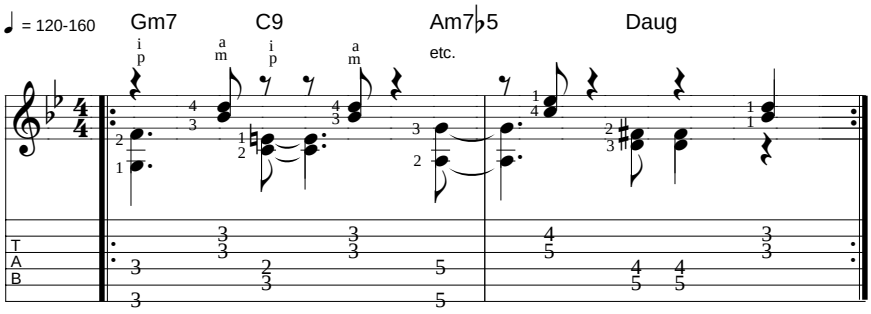
For starters, jumping quickly from chord to chord will build left-hand dexterity. Next, plucking the piano player's left-hand part (stems down) with your thumb and index finger, and the right-hand part (stems up) with your middle and ring fingers will strengthen fingerstyle chops. (Pickers aren't off the hook. Simply team up your pick and middle finger, and your ring and pinky fingers.) The groove's heavy syncopation will help deepen your rhythmic pocket, but, most of all, this riff will teach you to handle bass lines *and* chords.

When you've got this montuno licked, try revoicing it so you can handle it in other keys (**Ex. 2**). Now all you need is a percussionist and a trumpet player, and this groove will last all night.

Ex. 1



Ex. 2



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